

CHAPTER 10

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT
(AIRPORT AND AIRWAY TRUST FUND)

The conferees provide \$5,100,000 for FAA "Facilities and equipment", to address expenses resulting from hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne in the southeastern United States. The Administration requested the same amount under FAA "Operations". This funding is consistent with FAA's initial estimates of damage to radars, navigation and communications equipment, air traffic control towers, and other facilities. Funds are designated as an emergency requirement, to be derived from the airport and airway trust fund, and made available until expended.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO AIRPORTS
(AIRPORT AND AIRWAY TRUST FUND)

The conferees provide \$25,000,000 for FAA "Emergency assistance to airports", to reimburse public use airports for unanticipated capital expenses resulting from hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne in the southeastern United States. Funds are designated as an emergency requirement, to be derived from the airport and airway trust fund, and made available until expended. The distribution of these funds is at the discretion of the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration.

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
FEDERAL AID HIGHWAYS EMERGENCY RELIEF
PROGRAM
(HIGHWAY TRUST FUND)

The conferees provide \$1,202,000,000 to fund emergency expenses resulting from hurricanes Charley, Frances, Gaston, Ivan, and Jeanne, and other eligible activities authorized by 23 U.S.C. 125. Funds are to be derived from the highway trust fund and made available until expended.

The bill provides funding to respond to the backlog of emergency needs arising largely from natural disasters in 2004 and prior years. As requested, the conference agreement exempts expenses for projects related to hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne from the statutory cap of \$100,000,000 per disaster, per state, because current estimates indicate that valid needs may exceed that cap. Consistent with the purpose of these funds, the entire amount has been designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 402 of S. Con. Res. 95.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
UNANTICIPATED NEEDS

The conferees provide \$70,000,000, as requested, for "Unanticipated Needs", to reimburse the American Red Cross for reimbursement of disaster relief and recovery expenses and emergency services associated with hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne. The appropriation designates such expenses as an emergency requirement; stipulates that funds may be disbursed to any authorized federal agency; limits agency administrative costs to 3 percent; and requires the head of the U.S. Government Accountability Office to audit the use of such funds.

CHAPTER II

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
MEDICAL SERVICES

The conferees have provided \$38,283,000 for medical services for hurricane and tropical storm related expenses. The amount provided is the same as the amount requested President.

MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION

The conferees have provided \$1,940,000 for medical administration for expenses in-

curred in response to hurricane relief efforts and other expenses. The amount provided is the same as the amount requested by the President.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

The conferees have provided \$46,909,000 for medical facilities for hurricane and tropical storm related expenses at VA facilities. The amount provided is the same as the amount requested by the President.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION
GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES

The conferees have provided \$545,000 for general operating expenses. The amount provided is the same as requested by the President.

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

The conferees have provided \$50,000 for the National Cemetery Administration for clean-up and repairs at national cemeteries damaged during hurricanes and related tropical storms. The amount provided is the same as requested by the President.

CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

The conferees have provided \$36,343,000 for construction, minor projects to support repairs to VA facilities damaged during hurricanes and related tropical storms. The amount provided is the same as requested by the President.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENTCOMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND

The agreement provides \$150,000,000 for disaster relief, long-term recovery, and mitigation in communities affected by disasters designated by the President between August 31, 2003 and October 1, 2004. The amount has been designated by the President as an emergency requirement.

In allocating these funds, the Department of Housing and Urban Development should work closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to ensure that these funds are used solely for disaster relief and are provided to areas facing the greatest need. The conferees direct HUD, prior to the allocation of funds, to provide the Committees on Appropriations with an explanation of the purpose for which funds are requested and how the activity or program was affected by the disaster. In addition, HUD is to continue to provide the Committees with quarterly reports on the use of CDBG funds provided for disaster relief.

INDEPENDENT AGENCIES

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

The conferees have included \$3,000,000 for the repair of the Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf Ecology Division Facilities in Gulf Breeze, Florida.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE
ADMINISTRATION

SPACE FLIGHT CAPABILITIES

The conferees have provided a total of \$126,000,000 for repair of NASA facilities damaged during recent hurricanes and related events. The amount provided is the same as the budget request.

GENERAL PROVISION—THIS CHAPTER
(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The conferees have included a general provision which provides authority for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to transfer funds from "Medical services" to "General operating expenses" for the purpose of expediting the processing of benefits claims.

CHAPTER 12

General Provision—This Act

The conference agreement includes section 1201, regarding the availability of funds.

Emergency Designations

For purposes of section 402 of S. Con. Res. 95 (108th Congress), as made applicable to the House of Representatives by H. Res. 649 (108th Congress) and applicable to the Senate by section 14007 of Public Law 108-287, funds appropriated in this Division are provided in response to a situation which poses a direct threat to life and property, is sudden, is an urgent and compelling need, is unpredictable, and is not permanent in nature.

JOE KNOLLENBERG,
JAMES T. WALSH,
ROBERT B. ADERHOLT,
KAY GRANGER,
VIRGIL GOODE,
DAVID VITTER,
JACK KINGSTON,
ANDER CRENSHAW,
BILL YOUNG,
CHET EDWARDS,
SAM FARR,
ALLEN BOYD,
SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.,
NORMAN D. DICKS,

Managers on the Part of the House.

KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON,
CONRAD BURNS,
LARRY E. CRAIG,
MIKE DEWINE,
SAM BROWNBACK,
TED STEVENS,
DIANNE FEINSTEIN,
DANIEL K. INOUE,
TIM JOHNSON,
MARY L. LANDRIEU,
ROBERT C. BYRD,

Managers on the Part of the Senate.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4837,
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AP-
PROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order at any time to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 4837) making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes; that all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration be waived, and that the conference report be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the previous order of the House, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 4837) making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see immediately prior proceedings of the House of today.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material and that I may include tabular material on H.R. 4837.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I consider it a distinct honor to be here today to present H.R. 4837, the fiscal year 2005 Military Construction appropriations bill.

I am grateful to the conferees in both parties in both Houses for acting together in unison to produce an effective piece of legislation that I think we can all be proud of.

It is important to understand that this bill is not about lawmakers in Washington. H.R. 4837 is about people, specifically the soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen and their families who serve this great country. We must never forget their selfless service. I firmly believe this bill reflects our

commitment to their continued sacrifice.

First, I would like to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) for his continued unwavering support. The gentleman truly understands the importance of this bill and has laid a solid foundation on how to construct this successful legislation. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) is a great advocate for our men and women in uniform, and his position is reflected in our final product.

I would also like to commend the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), on the subcommittee who has been doing great work. We have worked together for some time now, and it is a pleasure to have an association with him. Both he and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), whom I also salute, give the committee, I think, some real leadership and some dedicated advice and counsel, and I sincerely value the advice and wisdom they have given me. They lend a great deal to military construction matters.

The 2005 Military Construction appropriations bill totals \$10 billion and is in full compliance with the subcommittee's 302(b) allocation for both budget authority and outlays. It is both fiscally responsive and responsible, and it is focused on the quality-of-life needs of servicemembers and their families.

Some key funding highlights in this bill include \$5.5 billion for military construction; \$4.1 billion for family

housing; \$82 million for chemical demilitarization construction; \$246 million for the base realignment and closures account. H.R. 4837 also includes funding for family housing privatization projects. Housing privatization is one of the most critical and successful programs to support military families in years. Few programs rival the effectiveness that privatization has demonstrated; yet Congress instituted a spending cap that placed this program in jeopardy.

Although we worked closely with the authorizers to address this issue earlier this year, the subcommittee was not able to remove the cap through the appropriations process. However, I am proud to say because of the work of so many people that we now have authorization language to eliminate the cap altogether, paving the way to quality housing for military families for years to come. This was the right decision, and it was made for the right reasons; and I believe I can speak for all conferees when I say that we will continue to support family housing privatization initiatives in the future.

In conclusion, this year's Military Construction appropriations bill continues to focus on our country's greatest treasure, that is, the servicemembers and their families who serve our Nation.

By supporting this bill today, you are supporting our men and women in uniform.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS BILL - FY 2005 (H.R. 4837)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2004 Enacted	FY 2005 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. Enacted
Military construction, Army.....	1,448,239	1,771,285	1,862,854	1,977,166	1,981,084	+532,845
Rescissions.....	-183,615	---	---	---	-18,976	+164,639
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-106).....	162,100	---	---	---	---	-162,100
Total.....	1,426,724	1,771,285	1,862,854	1,977,166	1,962,108	+535,384
Military construction, Navy.....	1,238,458	1,060,455	1,081,042	1,016,315	1,069,947	-168,511
Rescissions.....	-45,622	---	---	---	-24,000	+21,622
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-106).....	45,530	---	---	---	---	-45,530
Total.....	1,238,366	1,060,455	1,081,042	1,016,315	1,045,947	-192,419
Military construction, Air Force.....	1,067,751	663,964	797,865	841,131	866,331	-201,420
Rescission.....	-23,000	---	---	---	-21,800	+1,200
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-106).....	292,550	---	---	---	---	-292,550
Total.....	1,337,301	663,964	797,865	841,131	844,531	-492,770
Military construction, Defense-wide.....	653,656	709,337	718,837	696,491	686,055	+32,399
Rescission.....	-72,309	---	---	---	-22,737	+49,572
Total.....	581,347	709,337	718,837	696,491	663,318	+81,971
Total, Active components.....	4,583,736	4,205,041	4,460,598	4,531,103	4,515,904	-67,834
Military construction, Army National Guard.....	311,592	295,657	394,100	381,765	446,748	+135,156
Military construction, Air National Guard.....	222,908	127,368	180,533	231,083	243,043	+20,135
Rescission.....	---	---	---	---	-5,000	-5,000
Total.....	222,908	127,368	180,533	231,083	238,043	+15,135
Military construction, Army Reserve.....	88,451	87,070	116,521	66,325	92,377	+3,926
Military construction, Naval Reserve.....	45,498	25,285	30,955	33,735	44,246	-1,252
Military construction, Air Force Reserve.....	62,032	84,556	111,725	101,373	123,977	+61,945
Total, Reserve components.....	730,481	619,936	833,834	814,281	945,391	+214,910
Total, Military construction.....	5,314,219	4,824,977	5,294,432	5,345,384	5,461,295	+147,076
Appropriations.....	(5,138,585)	(4,824,977)	(5,294,432)	(5,345,384)	(5,553,808)	(+415,223)
Rescissions.....	(-324,546)	---	---	---	(-92,513)	(+232,033)
North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program.....	169,300	165,800	165,800	165,800	165,800	-3,500
Rescission.....	-8,000	---	---	---	-5,000	+3,000
Total.....	161,300	165,800	165,800	165,800	160,800	-500
Family housing construction, Army.....	383,591	636,099	636,099	636,099	636,099	+252,508
Rescission.....	-94,151	---	---	---	-21,000	+73,151
Total.....	289,440	636,099	636,099	636,099	615,099	+325,659
Family housing operation and maintenance, Army.....	1,033,026	928,907	926,507	928,907	926,507	-106,519
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-106).....	11,420	---	---	---	---	-11,420
Total.....	1,044,446	928,907	926,507	928,907	926,507	-117,939
Family housing construction, Navy and Marine Corps....	184,193	139,107	139,107	139,107	139,107	-45,086
Rescission.....	-40,508	---	---	---	-12,301	+28,207
Total.....	143,685	139,107	139,107	139,107	126,806	-16,879
Family housing operation and maintenance, Navy and Marine Corps.....	835,078	704,504	696,304	704,504	696,304	-138,774
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-106).....	6,280	---	---	---	---	-6,280
Total.....	841,358	704,504	696,304	704,504	696,304	-145,054
Family housing construction, Air Force.....	657,065	846,959	846,959	846,959	846,959	+189,894
Rescission.....	-19,347	---	---	---	-45,171	-25,824
Total.....	637,718	846,959	846,959	846,959	801,788	+164,070
Family housing operation and maintenance, Air Force....	816,074	863,896	854,666	856,114	853,384	+37,310
Emergency appropriations (P.L. 108-106).....	6,981	---	---	---	---	-6,981
Total.....	823,055	863,896	854,666	856,114	853,384	+30,329

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS BILL - FY 2005 (H.R. 4837)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2004 Enacted	FY 2005 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. Enacted
Family housing construction, Defense-wide.....	350	49	49	49	49	-301
Family housing operation and maintenance, Defense-wide	49,440	49,575	49,575	49,575	49,575	+135
Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement						
Fund.....	300	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	+2,200
Rescission.....	-9,692	---	---	---	-19,109	-9,417
Total.....	-9,392	2,500	2,500	2,500	-16,609	-7,217
Total, Family housing.....	3,820,100	4,171,596	4,151,766	4,163,814	4,052,903	+232,803
Chemical demilitarization construction, Defense.....	119,815	81,886	81,886	81,886	81,886	-37,929
Base realignment and closure account.....	370,427	246,116	246,116	246,116	246,116	-124,311
General provision (sec. 118).....	55,000	63,000	63,000	---	---	-55,000
Grand total:						
New budget (obligational) authority.....	9,840,861	9,553,375	10,003,000	10,003,000	10,003,000	+162,139
Appropriations.....	(9,812,244)	(9,553,375)	(10,003,000)	(10,003,000)	(10,198,094)	(+385,850)
Emergency appropriations.....	(524,861)	---	---	---	---	(-524,861)
Rescissions.....	(-496,244)	---	---	---	(-195,094)	(+301,150)

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS BILL - FY 2005 (H.R. 4837)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2004 Enacted	FY 2005 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. Enacted
SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS ACCOUNTS						
Military Construction, Army.....	1,426,724	1,771,285	1,862,854	1,977,166	1,962,108	+535,384
Military Construction, Navy.....	1,238,366	1,060,455	1,081,042	1,016,315	1,045,947	-192,419
Military Construction, Air Force.....	1,337,301	663,964	797,865	841,131	844,531	-492,770
Military Construction, Defense-wide.....	581,347	709,337	718,837	696,491	663,318	+81,971
Total, Active components.....	4,583,738	4,205,041	4,460,598	4,531,103	4,515,904	-67,834
Military Construction, Army National Guard.....	311,592	295,657	394,100	381,765	446,748	+135,156
Military Construction, Air National Guard.....	222,908	127,368	180,533	231,083	238,043	+15,135
Military Construction, Army Reserve.....	88,451	87,070	116,521	66,325	92,377	+3,926
Military Construction, Naval Reserve.....	45,498	25,285	30,955	33,735	44,246	-1,252
Military Construction, Air Force Reserve.....	62,032	84,556	111,725	101,373	123,977	+61,945
Total, Reserve components.....	730,481	619,936	833,834	814,281	945,391	+214,910
Total, Military Construction.....	5,314,219	4,824,977	5,294,432	5,345,384	5,461,295	+147,076
North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program.....	161,300	165,800	165,800	165,800	160,800	-500
Family Housing, Army:						
Construction.....	289,440	636,099	636,099	636,099	615,099	+325,659
Operation and Maintenance.....	1,044,446	928,907	926,507	928,907	926,507	-117,939
Family Housing, Navy and Marine Corps:						
Construction.....	143,685	139,107	139,107	139,107	126,806	-16,879
Operation and Maintenance.....	841,358	704,504	696,304	704,504	696,304	-145,054
Family Housing, Air Force:						
Construction.....	637,718	846,959	846,959	846,959	801,788	+164,070
Operation and Maintenance.....	823,055	863,896	854,666	856,114	853,384	+30,329
Family Housing, Defense-wide:						
Construction.....	350	49	49	49	49	-301
Operation and Maintenance.....	49,440	49,575	49,575	49,575	49,575	+135
Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund.....	-9,392	2,500	2,500	2,500	-16,609	-7,217
Total, Family Housing.....	3,820,100	4,171,596	4,151,766	4,163,814	4,052,903	+232,803
Chemical demilitarization construction, Defense.....	119,815	81,886	81,886	81,886	81,886	-37,929
Base Realignment and Closure Account.....	370,427	246,116	246,116	246,116	246,116	-124,311
General provision (sec. 118).....	55,000	63,000	63,000	---	---	-55,000
Grand Total.....	9,840,861	9,553,375	10,003,000	10,003,000	10,003,000	+162,139

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS BILL - FY 2005 (H.R. 4837)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2004 Enacted	FY 2005 Request	House	Senate	Conference	Conference vs. Enacted

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET RECAP						
Scorekeeping adjustments:						
Emergency appropriations.....	-524,861	---	---	---	---	+524,861
Total, adjustments.....	-524,861	---	---	---	---	+524,861
Total (including adjustments).....	9,316,000	9,553,375	10,003,000	10,003,000	10,003,000	+687,000
Amounts in this bill.....	(9,840,861)	(9,553,375)	(10,003,000)	(10,003,000)	(10,003,000)	(+162,139)
Scorekeeping adjustments.....	(-524,861)	---	---	---	---	(+524,861)
Prior year outlays.....	---	---	---	---	---	---
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Total mandatory and discretionary.....	9,316,000	9,553,375	10,003,000	10,003,000	10,003,000	+687,000
Mandatory.....	---	---	---	---	---	---
Mandatory (prior year).....	---	---	---	---	---	---
Mandatory (total).....	---	---	---	---	---	---
Discretionary.....	(9,316,000)	(9,553,375)	(10,003,000)	(10,003,000)	(10,003,000)	(+687,000)
Discretionary (prior year).....	---	---	---	---	---	---
Discretionary Defense (total).....	(9,316,000)	(9,553,375)	(10,003,000)	(10,003,000)	(10,003,000)	(+687,000)
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
DISCRETIONARY 302B ALLOCATION						
GENERAL PURPOSE.....	9,316,000	9,553,375	10,003,000	10,003,000	10,003,000	+687,000
302B ALLOCATION.....	---	---	10,003,000	---	---	---
OVER/UNDER.....	9,316,000	9,553,375	---	10,003,000	10,003,000	+687,000

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Military Construction appropriations bill because it provides vital funding for military housing and training facilities. Also in this bill is much-needed \$11 billion in emergency funding for hurricane relief for hard hit families, businesses, farmers, and military installations in the southeastern United States and \$2.8 billion in drought relief for farmers throughout the country.

Since others will speak on the hurricane and agriculture relief portions of this bill, I would like, Mr. Speaker, to focus my comments on the underlying Military Construction appropriations. First, I want to commend the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) for his dedicated leadership on behalf of our military troops and families. He always puts the interests of our military above all other interests, and for that he has my deepest personal respect.

I also want to commend the outstanding committee staff led by Carol Murphy, Rob Nabors, Tom Forhan, and my legislative director John Conger. Their work was professional, thorough and fair. And while these dedicated staff seldom receive public recognition, which they deserve, the truth is they have made a positive difference in the lives of our servicemen and -women and their families.

Our best wishes go out to our Democratic committee staffer Tom Forhan who is recuperating from shoulder surgery. We wish him well and thank him for his many years of service to our military.

I am especially proud of the leadership efforts made by members of this committee to pressure this Congress into not leaving home until we had lifted the cap on the public/private military housing program. This innovative program, started during the previous administration and moved forward under this administration, it is providing better housing to tens of thousands of military families while saving American taxpayers billions of dollars. New housing that would have taken 50 years to build under the old system is now being built in 5 years, leveraging the strength and resources of the public and private sectors.

I will never forget at Fort Hood several years ago visiting one of the newest homes under this program and meeting the sergeant and his wife who served our country so nobly for so many years. In talking to the wife she said, it is not only that this is a home I can be so very proud of to raise our children in, but this home is, as my husband is serving his country around the world, this home says to me and my children that our country has not forgotten the sacrifices we too have made on behalf of our Nation.

That is the importance of this program. It is not only about new housing,

better housing that is so well deserved by our military families. It is about respect for those families. Unfortunately, this program would have come to a halt this month or next had Congress not lifted the arbitrary and unnecessary cap on it.

This committee made it clear that we would leave no stone unturned until the cap was lifted because it would have been a terrible disservice to our military families to freeze this vital military housing improvement program during a time of war. With the cap being lifted in the Defense authorization bill as a result of pressure placed by this committees, tens of thousands of military families will now have modern housing they can also be proud to call their home. And that happened because of the special efforts of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG); the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), the chairman of the full Committee on Appropriations; the ranking member of the full committee, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY); the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER); the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON); and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS). They all deserve our thanks and gratitude for not letting military families be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, there are numerous high-priority projects in this bill at U.S. military installations here, at home, and throughout the world. I think this committee did an outstanding job on a bipartisan basis of taking limited resources and placing them in the highest priority areas.

I would be remiss, though, if I did not mention one major disappointment about this bill. I think it is sad that a year and a half after the beginning of the Iraqi war, with all the sacrifices being made for our servicemen and -women and their families, this Military Construction bill funds these vital housing and training facilities and day care facilities at a level that is \$500 million below what we funded 2 years ago before the Iraqi war began. I simply do not understand a Congress that 2 days ago could find offsets to pay for over \$130 billion in tax cuts for corporations and for fishing tackle box manufacturers, a tax cut bill that had a lot of good in it and one that I supported, but I do not understand a Congress that can so easily find offsets to pay for that kind of tax cut for corporations and fishing tackle box manufacturers, cannot find offsets to see that we do not cut real funding for military construction projects during a time of war.

This Congress, the next Congress needs to set its priorities straight; and especially as we fight the war on terrorism, we should not be shortchanging the total funding budget for quality-of-life programs for our military while we can easily pass 100, 200, \$300 billion tax cuts for corporations and others that are not making nearly the sacrifices that are being made by our servicemen and -women.

Nevertheless, that funding level was not decided by this subcommittee. That was made at a different pay grade in this Congress. Given the limited resources in this subcommittee's jurisdiction, I think it did the best job it could. It did an excellent job of seeing that high-priority programs were funded, and for that reason I support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to make sure that we did not omit thanks to the staff on both sides who have done tremendous work over the past several months, and I want to list those now. Obviously, Carol Murphy on the majority side and Tom Forhan on the minority side. Tom was in the hospital this week, so he could not be here, but they have been great to work with all year. In addition, let me salute Walter Hearne, Mary Arnold, Eric Elsmo, Jeff Onizuk on my staff, Bernard Chau on my staff, and of course I thank John Conger who has also been a part of this process. So to all of them, thank you very, very much.

□ 1230

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS), who obviously has some comments to make.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time, and congratulate him on a wonderful performance on this bill, as well as the ranking member.

I wanted to take just a few seconds here to praise the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), the full committee chairman, for the grueling work that he has done to bring to this floor aid for Florida but also the other States who suffered damage from the recent hurricanes.

As late as at least two o'clock this morning, the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) was on the telephone, in the office, with the staff, running from room to room, to make this happen. This was a grueling experience, and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) was a part of that effort, as well as many others, but I just wanted to say thank you to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) for caring for his people.

Now, he legislates for the Nation, and he is the chairman for the full Committee on Appropriations for the whole Nation, but his State was ravaged by these four unprecedented hurricanes, with people living in tents, without electricity and in dire straits, and he cared for his people enough to work around the clock to make this happen. I just wanted to take a second to say thank you to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I think that it is very appropriate that

we do pay tribute to the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG).

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) and ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to yield time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

I certainly would have had liked to have had more time to yield to the gentleman from Kentucky (Chairman ROGERS). I sort of like what he was saying, but I think there are many people who deserve more credit than I on this issue of getting our job done. I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS) and also the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), the chairman of the subcommittee.

They have done an outstanding job. They have produced a Military Construction bill that is really good, especially for the people who serve in our military, and for their quality of life and housing. They have just done an outstanding job, and I cannot say enough good words about the work that they have done.

But I am going to talk about the other part of this bill, and I thank them for allowing the full committee to piggyback on their subcommittee work to include the Hurricane Supplemental Relief Act. I am not going to take a lot of our time. We have discussed this supplemental bill so many times, not only here on the floor and in committee, but in person, in meetings, and on telephone calls.

Just briefly, let me say that last Wednesday when we passed the hurricane supplemental, I had two bills introduced in the House, H.R. 5212, which is the one that we passed, and H.R. 5227, which I had stated was a much better bill. H.R. 5212, as I also said, was a very good bill as far as it went, but it did not go far enough. H.R. 5227 was better. Well, what we are considering today is very, very close to H.R. 5227, which is the better bill, and we are excited about the quality of the legislation and what it does for the people of the State of Florida.

Again, as I have done in the past, I want to compliment all of our leadership who have worked hard to help us make this happen. There were a lot of obstacles to get to where we are today. I have to tell my colleagues, for those that have been to conference and had difficulties, they know what I mean, but for those who have not, just let me say that was not easy. It was a big challenge.

The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), who oftentimes we have disagreements on the floor on issues procedurally, has been totally coopera-

tive. He has helped us move these bills along, and I want to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) considerably for everything that he has had to endure as we were preparing this legislation.

I want to thank our leadership on both sides of the aisle and in the other body for trying to help smooth the way to get this bill to where it is today, and they have all helped. There were a lot of obstacles as I have said. They all helped.

I want to recognize the Members of the committee, especially the ones from Florida, many of whose districts suffered many of the damages. This delegation of ours, and we have a split delegation, Republican and Democrat, came together to help the people of our State who experienced such tragedy from these four major hurricanes.

I mentioned the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD), he and I went to Florida together and looked at some of the damage from Hurricane Ivan. I went to Florida with the President to view some of the damages with him, and I live in Florida, so I was in Florida during several of these hurricanes. I had to evacuate at one point, which I did, and evacuated almost into the path of the storm. It has been quite an experience.

The President of the United States made a firm commitment to those of us in Florida and neighboring States that were affected seriously by the hurricanes. We negotiated for a week to get the bill we are presenting today. The President of the United States made a promise to the people of Florida. He has kept that promise. He has kept his commitment. This legislation is proof positive that what President Bush promised, he delivered.

I want to say also that the Governor of Florida, Jeb Bush, is almost a Superman in the way that he managed the response to these hurricanes, working not only with Federal officials, but also working with State officials, county officials, city officials, voluntary organizations like the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and so many others; Governor Bush managed this effort and did such a tremendous job.

I want to thank the Florida National Guard under the leadership of General Barnett. The Florida National Guard responded with a fantastic response, and I visited with many of the Guardsmen, as did the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER). We visited quite a few of the Guardsmen that were working on the recovery and protecting property, and stopping looters. Florida National Guard did an outstanding job.

Our first responders, our police, our firefighters, all did such a tremendous job, and I wish we had a lot more time to pay tribute to all of the people who helped, but especially my delegation, the people that I work with on a daily basis. Both sides of the aisle worked hard. They were committed. They were

dedicated, and together, we made sure that this relief package came together today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time at this point if there are other speakers on the other side.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD), who is a member of the Subcommittee on Military Construction of the Committee on Appropriations, and played a key role not only on the military provisions of this bill but as a representative of the people from Florida and worked very hard on a bipartisan basis on the Florida hurricane relief.

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), for yielding me the time.

I want to start by thanking the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), our chairman, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), our ranking member, for their work to get to this point. They truly worked in a bipartisan way. There are two components to this bill that we have before us on the floor, Mr. Speaker, and that is, the MILCON portion and also the hurricane supplemental portion. We have heard about both of them, but I just want to make a few brief comments.

First of all, on the MILCON side, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) did the very best they could with the dollars given them, but my colleagues must know that the dollars are short. Many of the items that the President sent down for the MILCON request are not included in this bill simply because the House leadership did not set aside enough money to fulfill those requests made by the President to prosecute the war.

I must tell my colleagues that there is one item in here, though, that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) did bring in for a landing, and that is, the housing issue, to privatize the housing cap. I think all of this Nation, and particularly the troops and their families, owe a debt of gratitude to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) and especially the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) who has bulldogged this issue for so many years now. He has done an absolutely fantastic job.

We heard our chairman, the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) speak on the hurricane side, the hurricane relief. I want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG), Mr. Speaker, if I could, for the work that he has done. As everybody knows, the request that came down from the White House was insufficient. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) made a commitment to his people that he would get the money, and President Bush has provided it, but he has only provided it at the insistence of the gentleman from Florida (Mr.

YOUNG) who would not quit until he got what he needed.

We needed that money because our beaches were destroyed. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and I and our people lived through those hurricanes. Most of our people lived through them. We had some people who did not live through them. I had six constituents that died in Hurricane Ivan, Mr. Speaker, and this money was much needed to repair our beaches, to repair the transportation systems that were busted.

We have all seen the pictures of I-10, to repair the military facilities. The naval air station in Pensacola had significant damage. So it is imperative that we did this, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) for getting it here.

I must tell my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, though, that it has been held up because of several issues, but one of those issues was the offset which was going to be required for some of the agricultural funding. Mr. Speaker, that issue has been resolved with a smoke-and-mirrors game as the public will begin to understand as we go on. It is offset by directed scoring, and it is also offset sometime in the future, as many as 10 years out into the future, and it is offset in the farm bill, and we will write a new farm bill before we even get the full offset.

Again, let me close, Mr. Speaker, by thanking again the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) but also the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) for bringing this in for a landing.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON), from Florida's space center.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time, and I want to commend the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) for the outstanding work he did on this bill.

I also want to commend the President. The initial submission the President had, there was not enough funds in there to take care of all the beaches that had been damaged in the State, and I forwarded the data to them, and I showed them the extent of the damage. The President's staff recognized that we obviously had a greater need, and they were willing to come along with the chairman.

I think the system worked very, very well. I think the President and his people were very eager to make sure the people in Florida got what they needed, and it is going to take a while for us to recover from this hurricane, but these funds that the chairman has secured and everybody in this body and the other body and the President worked hard on is going to help get Florida back on track and all the other States that were damaged.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas

(Mr. STENHOLM) who is so widely respected on a bipartisan basis in this Congress on agriculture.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, first, I want to commend the gentleman from Michigan (Chairman KNOLLENBERG) and the gentleman from Texas (Ranking Member EDWARDS) for the work they did on the base bill that we are talking about today, from the standpoint of Dyess Air Force Base in my district, and fire crash station being funded, a refueling vehicle maintenance shop, and then in Goodfellow and at Dyess, the 127 housing units which are extremely important to the troops back home. We appreciate taking care of those needs.

I want to concentrate the remainder of my remarks, though, on the disappointment that I share in the manner in which the leadership of this House has chosen to deal with the emergency funding.

□ 1245

Again, I point out I am for everything that Florida is receiving. They deserve every penny of it. I share the frustrations of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD) in that, seemingly, the leadership of this body, not the chairman of the committee, but the leadership of this body has chosen to do things a little bit differently.

I particularly am sorry to see that the bipartisan legislative process that worked so well between Larry Combest and I on the Committee on Agriculture has been sacrificed for craven political considerations. I think it is highly regrettable the President chose to help Florida producers only, and then the leadership of this body made sure that that was to be the way that we would proceed with this legislation.

We are reopening the farm bill. And I understand the gimmicks that are being used and all today, but those of us that have been around a little while know that when you do some of the things that have been done in this body over the last few days, there will be another year and it will not be good for agriculture in America. Just a reminder. In the early morning hours of this past Wednesday, the leadership of this House told our Nation's producers to forget about assistance for drought. They made it clear there would be no assistance for crops lost to devastating weather. By 10 a.m., however, they finally understood the message that should have been evident long before. As a result, we have a drought assistance package today and we are extending a helping hand to farmers and ranchers outside of Florida.

But make no mistake about it, we are also cutting the farm bill. If the 17 Members on the other side of the aisle, who had been original cosponsors of the good policy, had stayed with their conscience and not bent to the political will of their leadership, we would have had a victory for American agriculture,

a victory for the process that is so important to this House that the chairman of the full committee has expressed his own frustrations about. But the leadership of this House had another agenda, and it turned the screws and singled out agriculture.

There are no offsets in this bill for the aid that will go to Florida, but there are offsets of aid that will go to farmers and ranchers in other parts of the country. The message to this House is clear: the folks who provide the Nation's food and fiber who happen to live outside of politically important Florida are in a separate and lower class.

Mr. Speaker, those of us who worked on the 2002 farm bill and those in the agriculture communities know how important it was to build a consensus. We developed a consensus policy that meets the needs of farmers and ranchers, that preserves natural resources and ensures the provision of food for those in need. While we need the drought aid in this package, and I support this package, the cut that will ultimately be made in farm conservation will have dire consequences for the future of this consensus.

Mr. Speaker, it did not have to be this way. We did not have to be here on Saturday afternoon doing what the chairman and the ranking member and this committee have had to do. We did not have to do it this way. But this is another perfectly live, living example of the lack of leadership in this body to allow this House to work its will based on what the Members of this House want done, and not what a small group in a leadership room somewhere in the House determine should be done, and usually for political purposes, not in the best interest of our country.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY), a gentleman who played host to at least three hurricanes in his district, and he might have had all four of them. His district suffered a lot of the damage.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman very much for yielding me this time, and Florida cannot thank him enough for his hard work and dedication to our State. On military issues, or just name the range of issues that are covered for this country, and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) has been and is such a great patriot and a wonderful man and we thank him.

There has been a lot of conversation on the floor that they did not do enough, they did not add enough, they did not provide enough, whatever. You know what, people lost their lives in Florida. Some have lost everything they own. So what I would like to do is be thankful, thankful to all the people in this process that have done so much for our State.

My colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD), and others have worked so hard. It is not about politics. The storms are not political. Neither Republicans or Democrats ordered

storms to hit Florida. People are suffering now, yet we still get a little backbiting in the room. So I would just like to thank so many people. The President, the Governor, Senator GRAHAM, Senator NELSON. And I know I am not supposed to mention the other body by name, so I retreat from that; but I would at least like to say in a bipartisan fashion that we have worked hard for the people of Florida taking care of our agricultural interests, taking care of our beaches and FEMA, the Red Cross.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on with the litany of people that have worked hard. The National Guard was mentioned. They have been down there in 95 and almost 100 degree heat and humidity handing out water and ice and providing MREs and things so people could just have a decent meal.

Storms have a way of bringing people together. Crises have a way of bringing people together. My proudest moment in this House, having served here for 10 years, was after September 11, when both sides of the aisle decided America needed to come first. And in these storms we find oftentimes that is the same integrity that is brought to this magnificent body.

So I want to thank all the people in both Chambers, both sides of the aisle, and recognize, on behalf of Floridians, who are watching us today, who are more interested in putting their lives back together and not necessarily who gets credit. There will be plenty of credit to go around. There will be plenty of opportunities to hand out the laurels and to receive the hardy handshakes to each and every one of us. But for the moment, the people working the hardest are in this room, the two Members who have allowed MilCon to proceed in order with this hurricane relief: the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG).

So while I want to once again thank everyone involved, I especially want to thank these two gentlemen again for their splendid cooperation and integrity. And though we do have fights on policy from time to time, when it is important for the Nation, when it is important for our families, when it is important for our fighting forces, uniquely we come together behind this Flag recognizing our responsibilities are not to our political parties or to our leaders, but they are to our constituents who sent us here.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington State (Mr. DICKS), who is a member of the subcommittee and who fought so hard for military family housing.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I thank our ranking Democrat member on the Subcommittee on Military Construction for yielding me this time. I want to congratulate him and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) for working together in a very spirited effort here to protect and take the cap

off the residential construction initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed working with the gentleman from Texas a few years ago when we both were working to help our areas at Fort Hood in Texas and Fort Lewis at Tacoma, Washington, start these projects, these residential construction initiatives. I think both of us saw in our own areas just how important these projects could be, how much faster we could get new housing and restore old housing.

To me, this is one of the finest programs that we have ever worked on. It has been worked on in a very bipartisan basis. When the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HOBSON) was the chairman of the subcommittee, he had great experience and looked into these projects in great detail. So I want to commend everyone here.

I also would like to say regarding my friend, the gentleman from Florida, (Mr. YOUNG), our chairman, what a great job he has done for the people of Florida in this bill. He has worked effectively with everyone. I know how difficult it is to put these things together.

I can remember back in 1980, when we lost 57 people in Washington State when Mt. St. Helens blew up and my former mentor, Senator Magnuson, was chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, we had to get help for our constituents in our State; and I am glad we all came together in support of this effort.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) has been a great chairman of our Committee on Appropriations. I have enjoyed working with him over the years he has been the chairman. I know he is proud of being able to put this bill together in the final days of this Congress and the final days of his chairmanship. So congratulation to him.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, I had mentioned the names of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), chairman of our subcommittee and his ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), and I mentioned my friend, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), ranking member on the full Committee on Appropriations. But the gentleman who just left the well, I would like our colleagues to know, there have been many critical points as we have tried to get this legislation to closure. Last night, we had a number of those critical points and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS), who just left the well, at one point offered very important help, and I just appreciate the fact that he did. He can claim a lot of responsibility for the fact we are here today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS), chairman of the Subcommittee on Defense on our Committee on Appropriations.

And when I talk about having critical moments last night, it was early

this morning, at around 2 a.m., that JERRY and I talked, because we had another very critical problem, an obstacle that had to be overcome. I told him the problem, and he offered a solution. He provided very important help this morning in the conference, and that help was very obvious.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have little doubt that the people of Florida know just how significant the work that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) has been about all this night on behalf of all of them. To have the chairman of this committee be that responsive at such a critical moment is evidence of the lifelong work of this wonderful man on behalf of his State in this House.

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) and I have had a chance to work with him for all these years on the Committee on Appropriations. It has indeed been a pleasure. I have told anybody who would but listen that the one quality of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) that I would hope one day to acquire involves his almost incredible patience, his patience in dealing with us especially in times of crises.

At a moment like this, as this very important base measure goes forward, to have him effectively put together the sort of response that we need to have in times of crises for the people of our country is reflective of his leadership. I know that most who have watched his work know just how effective he can be. But at this moment all the people of Florida are aware of that, and he will be here for as long as he wants to be here to continue with that service.

It is our privilege to work with him, and it was my great pleasure to spend a little time with him early this morning trying to deal with a few little difficulties last night. I congratulate our chairman on a job well done.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, in the main, I have no real objections to almost all of the provisions in this bill. I would note with respect to the drought aid for farmers and the disaster relief for States, those two items were like the tail on the dog. Originally they were attached to one appropriation bill, and now they have come back here today and the tail is attached to a different dog. I would like to make a few comments about that, because I do not think much of the process that has been followed.

This drought and disaster package was originally going to be folded into the Homeland Security appropriations bill.

□ 1300

The minority had doubts about that. We had preferred to have that package handled separately so that Homeland

Security could be handled separately without any attendant baubles and bells and whistles being attached. But in the interest of time, the majority decided it would be better to fold it into another bill, and we cooperated in that process.

But then some very strange things happened. First of all, an offset was adopted. After much objection being raised by the conservative members of the majority party caucus, a "let's pretend" offset to the drought aid cost was attached to this bill, and that offset does not really offset the money in this bill until 2014. So it is a very interesting "let's pretend" operation.

The gentleman from Florida tried to handle that in a straightforward way, but people who thought they knew better insisted that they go through this Rube Goldberg approach, so we have a "let's pretend" budget savings item in this bill.

There is another problem, because when the decision was made to, as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) indicated, essentially amend the farm bill in dealing with these issues, then that raised other concerns on the part of other farmers around the country. Because of that, Senator KOHL from my own State had been asking that the problems of dairy farmers be dealt with by extending the milk income support program. The Senate adopted that amendment in conference and presented it to the House conferees. We had the votes for that provision on the House side of the conference, but rather than allow us to have a vote on the issue, the chairman gaveled the conference to a close.

We then saw a Kabuki dance engaged in by the President and various Members of this House. The same day that that conference was being considered, the President said in a speech in my hometown, Wausau, Wisconsin, that he was in support of the content of the Kohl amendment to extend the milk program. Given that fact, the conference had every right to expect that the White House would be supporting what we were trying to do. But when we called down to the White House to ask whether or not they would be sending a letter in support of the amendment that had been presented to us by the Senate, the White House indicated that no support would be forthcoming, no letter would be forthcoming. Nonetheless, we tried to work with the majority, and late Thursday night, I was asked to sign a conference report based on the understanding that certain items would be in the bill and certain items would not be.

One of the items that was supposed to be in that bill was this provision, since we had the votes for it on both sides of the conference. And I signed the conference report.

The next morning when I returned to the Hill, we saw that a different judgment had been reached by the House leadership, and we were told that the Speaker and the majority whip said,

"No way. That provision is not going to be included in this bill."

What we have had, in my view, is the President talking one way in Wisconsin on this subject and his principal political allies are, at the same time, deep-sixing our efforts to try to pass what the President said he supported. When we asked the White House for some help to deal with it, they respectfully said "no."

So now we have a situation in which agriculture, as a sector in the budget, will suffer a long-term problem, because when this program expires, it means that the entire agriculture baseline budget will be \$800 million less than it would otherwise be, and that will substantially disadvantage every farm group when the next farm bill is written.

I rise today not to talk about the fact that that individual program is not in this bill, because that really is less important than what this process has done to the House.

What we have seen is this: We remember when the majority leadership held a rollcall open for 3 hours because they did not get the results they wanted on the Medicare bill. They lost the vote so they simply kept the rollcall open until the House reversed its position.

What we saw in this case is, when it was apparent that we had the votes (because we had the support of two members of the Republican Party in this House), when it was seen that we did have the votes for that provision, the conference was simply adjourned and, lo and behold, the subject was then moved to another conference committee, and there we had a situation in which we did not have the votes in that subcommittee.

What that means is, what the leadership has decided is that there is going to be a new way of operating around here. If you go into a committee and you lose a vote, it doesn't matter, you just move the subject to another committee and have the vote in another committee.

It just seems to me that this is a fundamental corruption of the democratic process. It is a fundamental corruption of the legislative process. What it means is that no committee need bother to reach any judgments on anything because if the leadership does not like it, or if the White House does not like it, they will simply reverse the decision regardless of the votes in the committees.

What has happened in my view is that this House has become a wholly owned subsidiary of the White House. What has happened is that this Capitol is really the East Wing of the White House. That is what it has become. No checks, no balances, no separate exercise of judgment or power. I would say that that is the most fundamental corruption of all that can occur in a legislative body.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make those points to simply point out my concerns

for the way this institution is being run.

I also want to express regret that despite the President's words on the dairy problem when he was in dairy country, it is apparent that the White House had no intention of following through on those words, and I regret that, too. In spite of that, I will vote for this bill because it meets legitimate needs of the country, and I think we have no choice but to do it.

But this is a sorry way to do business. I know the gentleman from Florida is not responsible, but the leadership of this House is, and sooner or later we need to ask whether regular procedures will be returned to the floor of this House and whether or not democracy will once again be honored in this House.

We are trying to impress the people of Iraq that they should have a democratic process. At the same time we see the legislative process, which is supposed to be the defining measure of any democracy, profoundly corrupted by these procedural high jinks, and it does no great credit to the House to allow that to happen.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). The Chair will note that during debate on this bill there have been several improper references to the other body. The Chair must remind all Members that under the rules and precedents of the House, it is not in order to cast reflections on the Senate or its Members, individually or collectively.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the very distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW). I do know that the gentleman from Florida lived through at least two hurricanes in his own home battered by the storms.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Wisconsin just delivered a speech of several minutes expressing frustration as to how the House is run. I want to stand today to express appreciation for the expeditious way in which the House, with the full cooperation of the minority and the majority, has brought help to those who are suffering in the States of Florida, Georgia, Alabama and all through the terrible path that these hurricanes have taken. Too seldom do Members in this body get up to say thank you, but on behalf of the residents of Florida and all of those who have been made homeless or have lost substantial property due to the hurricane, I want to express my appreciation for the expeditious way in which this matter has been brought through the House of Representatives.

I especially want to point out and thank my chairman, Congressman BILL YOUNG, whose hand has worked this through in such a marvelous way and the gentleman from Wisconsin, who has given his complete cooperation to the gentleman from Florida in order to see that relief is delivered. It does show

the compassion of all of the Members on both sides of the aisle for those who suffer.

On behalf of the people of the State of Florida, thank you.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), the second ranking member of the Subcommittee on Military Construction.

Mr. FARR. I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge that the underlying bill here, the Military Construction Appropriations bill, is really a tremendous improvement for the troops in America. I would like to acknowledge that if it was not for the terrific work of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) on our side and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) on the other side, this bill would not be before my colleagues, doing, I think, one of the greatest things we have ever done in Congress, and that is to help the troops with housing.

We had the pleasure of interviewing before the committee, the testifying of soldiers and their spouses. When the question was asked, what is the one thing the Congress can do to help the military most of all, the unanimous response—unanimous—was provide housing. In this bill we provide housing and really quality housing.

In my district, 2,000 homes are being built by the military alongside homes that are selling for \$1 million. These houses will be rented to men and women in uniform at affordable prices considerably below what the market is. We have gone on with other work of being able to create through the RCI an LLC so that we can build housing for civilian employees of the military who are mission critical. In areas where housing prices are going out of market, out of reach, this type of program is absolutely essential to maintain the military mission in the United States.

I want to thank the leaders, but especially I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), because he is the one that has been championing this more than anybody. He has been dogged about being able to make sure that we can continue building this type of housing wherever it is needed in the United States. For that effort and for his single stick-to-it-iveness on this, we need to give him a great deal of accolades and appreciation from all of us on both sides of the aisle.

Lastly, I would just like to say that I do not know if this is the last appropriations bill we are going to be adopting in Congress, but I would like to thank personally the leadership of the gentleman from Florida who has provided an incredible leadership in the committee to be fair to everyone. We will greatly miss him.

Thank you for your service, Mr. YOUNG.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished

gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. HARRIS), who also experienced the wrath of several hurricanes.

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, during the last month and a half, the worst of circumstances have summoned the best of humanity. Responding to the unprecedented devastation of four hurricanes, the people of Florida have shown enormous courage, resilience and fortitude. That is why the expedited process on the conference report for disaster relief is so imperative this morning.

The agriculture industry in central Florida has been devastated. The \$2.9 billion in emergency assistance for agriculture producers experiencing crop loss caused by natural disasters is desperately needed. Small businesses in our communities are being significantly impacted by physical damage, by inventory loss and by the lack of impetus to spend. The \$929 million in SBA disaster relief loans will help to leverage \$5.5 billion in low-interest loans to individuals and businesses.

Rural housing, farm worker housing, waterways, watersheds and community facilities have been torn apart by hurricane damage. The \$608 million in agricultural and rural assistance are central components to rebuilding these wonderful communities. In my district, Venice Beach lost 15 feet of sand, threatening municipal properties as well as homes, so the \$362 million for the Army Corps of Engineers to address these projects is essential. This disaster package will contribute to the promises made by President Bush to the people of Florida.

I thank the President for his immediate and consistent attention to the needs of Florida families and, in particular, Chairman YOUNG for his extraordinary and continued leadership. As well, I cannot begin to express the gratitude I feel for the professionalism, compassion and dedication of the men and women who have given of their time to help Floridians begin the arduous process of rebuilding their lives.

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The rebuilding will take time, but together, we will rebuild a strong and more vibrant State.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, I know we have an omnibus appropriations bill to pass in the lame duck session after the elections, but this could possibly be the gentleman from Florida's (Chairman YOUNG's) last subcommittee bill to oversee as chairman of the full committee. And I just want to take a moment to thank the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) for his tremendous dedicated, thorough, professional, and fair-minded leadership on all of the issues under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Appropriations. And I want to pay a special tribute to his better half. Beverly Young, the gentleman from Florida's (Chairman YOUNG) wife, is the Mother Teresa of

America's military families. Day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, she is out at our military hospitals visiting wounded soldiers and their families. And through her example, she has reminded every Member of this House the importance of always putting the interest of our military families first.

So I want to salute the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) for his leadership in the Committee on Appropriations and overseeing the interests of our Nation and, in particular, the special needs of our servicemen and women and their families and thank Mrs. Young for the example she has set for all of us in this House.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) for his response. And he is right. My wife is a real angel and commits a large portion of her time to helping soldiers and especially the wounded soldiers, and their families. Her commitment to the quality of life of our military is really special, and it gives me a really great feeling to know the extent that she is involved, and I appreciate the gentleman's calling that to the attention of our colleagues.

I do not want to overlook the fact, as we are talking about hurricane relief, that the underlying bill is an excellent military construction bill that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Chairman KNOLLENBERG) have presented.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM), another Floridian who has hosted hurricanes.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

I want to just rise and join any colleagues from Florida and the rest of the Congress in expressing my profound appreciation for the assistance that is on its way to a number of States but particularly Florida. Words are inadequate to describe the deep sense of loss that people have at looking at the devastation when they have a foot of sand in their home or an entire roof missing. But words are also inadequate to describe the profound sense of relief that comes when FEMA and State and local officials are there in a proactive way to provide tarps, to provide water, to provide batteries, to provide hot food; and it is a community effort.

But at the end of the day that community effort is made possible to a great degree in terms of resources by this Federal Government. So the bipartisan effort on the part of dozens and dozens of Members to help those drought-stricken in the Midwest and far West and those Floridians and Alabamans and Georgians and Carolinians who will pass on for generations the stories about Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne, our heart goes out to them, and we just express that deep

sense of appreciation to the hard-working men and women of the government who have been there making that relief happen and the appreciation to our fellow man, to our neighbors, to the American spirit that made the water and ice lines possible, that brought in truckloads of relief from churches and faith groups from all over the country to help their fellow man whom they had never met before. And it is just part of that great community spirit and that sense of what is the strength of America, Mr. Speaker.

But at the end of the day, working out the details is always difficult in a government this large, and we want to certainly tip our hat to the efforts that the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) has put into this. It is a debt of gratitude that we owe that we can never repay and all Floridians and all Americans are certainly grateful for the service he has performed for this Nation.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Chairman KNOLLENBERG) for his leadership on the underlying military construction bill. He did an outstanding job along with his excellent staff. I want to salute the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and others who worked so hard, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD), who worked so hard on a bipartisan basis to provide much-needed, deserved relief to the people of the southeastern United States, to Florida and other States.

I would like to finish with one note. I hope when we meet again next year to provide funding for military construction for our military families' housing and training ranges to help protect our troops, help them win battles and wars and come home safely to the hugs of their loved ones that we will not for the second year or third year in a row fund less for quality of life and military housing and training programs, construction programs, than we had funded before the Iraqi war began. A Congress that can afford trillion dollar tax cuts, a Congress that can pass \$137 billion predominately corporate tax cut bill just 2 days ago, less than 48 hours ago, certainly can afford not to short-change the funding that we commit to what should be a top priority, and that is quality of life for our military families.

I am proud of the work this committee did to stretch limited dollars, spend them wisely, efficiently, fairly on the highest-priority programs. But next year, we should not have to say, for the third year in a row, despite all the sacrifices of our military families and the war in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq, we are committing less total funding for them to military construction, much of which goes to quality-of-life programs, than we did before the sacrifices were asked of them in fighting these wars.

So I salute the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG), the leadership of the committee, the subcommittee, everyone who worked so well together on the underlying bill, and for those reasons, I will support this bill.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Again, I want to say this is just a great example of how our government and those of us who represent our respective constituents, can work without political involvements or political influence, and can work together for the best interests of our country. And the underlying bill, is a really great bill for military construction and to provide for quality-of-life for the men and women who serve in our military, and they deserve so much more than they get. And this Congress is going to continue to keep trying to get more for them and let them know how much we appreciate the sacrifices that they make.

The gentleman from Michigan (Chairman KNOLLENBERG) as chairman of this subcommittee, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), as the ranking member have done an outstanding job. The gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) as chairman of the Defense Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA), ranking minority, have also done a tremendous job for our military forces. And I want to thank everybody in this House for helping us move this hurricane disaster emergency supplemental. This House came together following in the manner that the Florida delegation came together, and we really did something good for people who reside in the State of Florida.

Again, I want to thank the President of the United States for the commitment and the promises that he has made to deliver aid and assistance to Floridians and neighboring States as they recover from these disasters. And I also want to thank the Governor of the State; the Red Cross; the Salvation Army; so many other voluntary organizations; the Florida National Guard, which did an outstanding job; all of our community leaders, the State level, the county level, the city level, and many volunteers; our emergency response leaders, everybody who really came together to help people that needed help in a State where the entire State of Florida, was touched by these disasters. Seldom does a disaster strike an entire State. In this case, during this hurricane season, no section of Florida was spared. Every part of Florida, to one degree or another, was impacted by the hurricanes. And so it is difficult for me to express the gratitude as effectively as I should.

And then there is one person who I guess, people would call a bureaucrat. I want to mention Josh Bolten. Josh Bolten has worked so hard with us, as the Director of OMB, negotiating, re-negotiating, solving problems, creating problems on occasion, but always

working together with us. The Director of OMB, who seldom receives praise from anybody in Congress, no matter who the Director is, this OMB Director, as far as I am concerned, is a very special person who really took the time to understand the needs of people who were injured and damaged and affected by tragedies and natural disasters. So to Josh Bolten, the Director of OMB, I express my thanks for the way he represented the President to fulfill our commitments.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked long enough on this issue. Let us vote.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4837, the Fiscal Year 2005 Military Construction Appropriations Act.

As is the usual practice, each project appropriated in this bill was authorized by the recently passed National Defense Authorization Act. In order to achieve this level of coordination, the appropriations and authorizations committees spent the past several weeks working hand-in-hand together to reach matching conference agreements on our respective bills. Working with Chairman KNOLLENBERG and Mr. EDWARDS during this process was a pleasure, and their efforts were essential to our success.

I thank the gentlemen from Michigan and Texas—as well as the tremendous staff at the Military Construction Appropriations Subcommittee—for their extraordinary efforts in producing the conference report before us, and look forward to joining my colleagues in voting “yes” on passage of this conference report.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

Pursuant to clause 10 of Rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of Rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4567, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 4567) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes:

(Conference report will be printed in Book II of the RECORD.)

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 108-774)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4567) “making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes”, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate, and